

London Sun

LONDON—The scope of the information that Donald Maclean, the British diplomat-turned spy, was able to pass to the Soviet Union can be measured by the pass which gave him free access to the greatest storehouse of American weapons secrets, the Atomic Energy Commission headquarters in Washington.

That pass was used often and late at night.

In February, 1947, halfway through Maclean's tour as first secretary of the British Embassy in Washington, he was appointed British secretary to the Combined Policy

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Committee on Atomic Affairs (CPC).

This committee was the product of a secret Quebec agreement between the United States, Britain and Canada, and its main function was to control the exchange of atomic information between the three governments.

The MacMahon Act, passed in the late summer of 1946, severely restricted U.S. participation in this exchange, and this, in turn, should have limited Maclean's access to valuable information.

However, the MacMahon Act, for technical reasons, did

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not become fully effective for several months. A 1956 State Department letter to Sen. James O. Eastland (D-Miss.) spelled out the nature of the material available to Maclean in the interim.

"He had an opportunity to have access to information shared by the three participating countries in the fields of patents, declassification matters and research and development in relation to the program of procurement of raw material from foreign sources by the Combined Development Agency, including estimates of supplies and requirements."

The CDA, an arm of the CPC, had as its essential task the preemptive purchase (mostly from the Belgian Congo) of uranium, which was still thought to be in exceedingly short supply. The idea was to get the uranium ahead of the Russians.

The Russians would have valued anything Maclean could tell them about where the West was buying its uranium, in what quantities and at what price.

Maclean was also in a position to inform the Russians that the United States had perfected a method for converting low-grade ore into high-grade uranium. The mere knowledge that it could be done would have been of critical value to Moscow's physicists.

But Maclean's "official ca-



DONALD MACLEAN
... had AEC secrets

chronic alcoholism and homosexual tendencies, Maclean was named head of the Foreign Office's American department.

The British government has minimized the importance of this job. However, the State Department has compiled an analysis of Maclean's role at the time which credits him with knowledge of the U.S.-Japanese treaty negotiations and the Korean War strategy.

The State Department account says that Maclean was aware of the critical American decision to "localize" the Korean conflict.

General Douglas A. MacArthur was always convinced that this priceless information had reached the Chinese via the Russians. He went to his grave certain not only of this, which meant that the Chinese could invade with impunity, but of the enemy's foreknowledge "of all our strategic troop movements." His belief was that the leaky security of the British was the main culprit.

capacity" stretched beyond his committees into the AEC building itself. This has been disclosed by Admiral Lewis E. Strauss, the AEC chairman at the time.

Maclean had a permanent pass which he picked up each time at the desk in the AEC lobby. When Strauss discovered it had been issued, he also discovered that the guards' record showed that Maclean "was a frequent visitor in the evenings and after usual work hours." Brian la Plante, then a security officer in the building, recalls that Maclean was using his pass "so often and at night" that he eventually reported him, and the pass was withdrawn. No inquiry, however, was held.

It is clear, from the evidence of former employees, that Maclean could have had access to virtually any rooms and files he chose.

In November, 1950, after an intervening posting to Cairo and a subsequent emotional crackup which involved his